

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-17

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 SS-15 SCI-06 INT-08 AEC-11 NSC-10

CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 AID-20 IO-13 SSO-00

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R 271734 Z JUN 73

FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6672

C O N F I D E N T I A L MEXICO 4634

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PBOR, MX

SUBJ: SALINITY: ASSESSMENT OF MEXICAN POSITION

REF: STATE 120276

SUMMARY: IN RESPONSE TO REFTEL, EMBASSY HERewith OFFERS ITS ASSESSMENT OF ANTICIPATED MEXICAN POSITION BEFORE MEETING JULY 6 BETWEEN FOREIGN SECRETARY RABASA AND AMBASSADOR BROWNELL. IT IS OUR HOPE THAT RABASA WILL MAKE ONE LAST PITCH FOR A BETTER DEAL ON THE THREE MOST IMPORTANT OUTSTANDING ISSUES, AND THAT IF WE CAN SWEETEN THE POT SOMEWHAT, HE WILL IN THE END ACCEPT OUR PROPOSALS AND PRESENT THEM TO PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA AS A VICTORY FOR MEXICO AS A RESULT OF HIS SUCCESSFUL NEGOTIATION. WE THINK THAT ECHEVERRIA AND RABASA ARE TRULY ANXIOUS TO HAVE A SETTLEMENT IN AUGUST SO THAT ECHEVERRIA CAN REFER TO IT AS A MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENT OF HIS ADMINISTRATION IN HIS SEPTEMBER 1 STATE OF THE NATION ADDRESS. END SUMMARY

1. WHILE WE DO NOT WISH TO BE UNWARRANTEDLY OPTIMISTIC, EMBASSY DOES BELIEVE THAT GOM HAS ESSENTIALLY ACCEPTED THE PROPOSAL MADE BY SECRETARY ROGERS MAY 13 AND EXPANDED UPON BY AMBASSADOR BROWNELL EARLIER THIS MONTH. WE ARE ENCOURAGED IN THIS BELIEF BY PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA'S STATEMENTS IN BAJA CALIFORNIA JUNE 25 AS REPORTED IN CONFIDENTIAL

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MEXICO 4599, AS WELL AS OTHER PUBLIC STATEMENTS SUGGESTING THAT AN AGREEMENT FAVORABLE TO MEXICO IS NEAR. WE THINK RABASA WILL PRESS FOR IMPROVEMENTS IN OUR PROPOSAL CONCERNING THE PERMANENT DIFFERENTIAL BETWEEN IMPERIAL AND MORELOS DAMS AND FOR GREATER SUBSTITUTION OF WELLTON- MOHAWK WATERS DURING THE INTERIM PERIOD. RABASA WILL CERTAINLY BE ABETTED IN THIS ENDEAVOR BY CABRERA, WHO IS LESS HAPPY ABOUT OUR PROPOSAL AND IS ANXIOUS TO ADD A COMPLETE MEXICAN VICTORY ON SALINITY TO HIS OWN PERSONAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS CONCERNING THE CHAMIZAL AND BOUNDARY TREATIES. OUR OWN RECOMMENDATION WOULD BE THAT TO THE EXTENT POSSIBLE AND REASONABLE WE TRY TO IMPROVE SOMEWHAT ON OUR PRESENT PROPOSAL, ESPECIALLY WITH REGARD TO SUBSTITUTION OF WATERS DURING THE INTERIM PERIOD, WHICH OVER THE LONGER TERM WOULD BE LESS COSTLY THAN A PERMANENT REDUCTION OF THE DIFFERENTIAL. WE RECOMMEND THIS AS A TRADE- OFF AGAINST MEXICO DROPPING ITS INSISTENCE ON COMPENSATION FOR DAMAGES OR A JOINT CLAIMS COMMISSION. DESPITE WHAT RABASA TOLD AMBASSADOR MCBRIDE ON JUNE 22 (MEXICO 4551), WE ARE CERTAIN THAT SUCH A CLAIMS COMMISSION WOULD SIMPLY PERPETUATE THE SALINITY PROBLEM INTO THE FUTURE AND COULD NOT CONSTITUTE AN ELEMENT IN A REALLY DEFINITIVE SOLUTION. AGAIN WE ARE ENCOURAGED BY ECHEVERRIA'S REMARKS IN BAJA CALIFORNIA JUNE 25 IN WHICH HE CLEARLY SEEMD TO BE STATING THAT THE WORKS BEING BUILT IN MEXICO AND THE U. S. WITH COMPLETE COST BORNE BY USG WOULD CONSTITUTE THE COMPENSATION FOR DAMAGES, AND THAT THE IMPROVED QUALITY OF WATER WOULD REPRESENT A PERMANENT AND JUST SOLUTION. PERHAPS SOME LANGUAGE TO THIS EFFECT COULD BE BUILT INTO THE FINAL AGREEMENT. IN ANY CASE, WE RECOMMEND THAT AMBASSADOR BROWNELL REMAIN FIRMLY AGAINST ANY FUTURE COMPENSATION FOR DAMAGES, AND WE BELIEVE THAT IN THE END THE MEXICANS WILL ACCEPT THIS IN RETURN FOR A SLIGHTLY IMPROVED PROPOSAL.

2. EMBASSY HAS NOT RECEIVED REPORTS OF CONVERSATIONS BETWEEN TWO COMMISSIONERS CONCERNING A SIMULTANEOUS MINUTE ON PUMPING OF GROUND WATER ON THE SAN LUIS MESA, BUT CABRERA'S COMMENTS JUNE 22 (MEXICO 4542) ARE NOT ENCOURAGING. NEVERTHELESS, OUR PROPOSAL SEEMS SO CONFIDENTIAL

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REASONABLE BOTH PRACTICALLY AND LEGALLY THAT WE THINK MEXICANS WILL IN THE END AGREE TO SUCH A MINUTE. WE RECOMMEND THAT AMBASSADOR BROWNELL HOLD RABASA TO HIS AGREEMENT IN THEIR MEETING ON JUNE 13 THAT THERE BE A SIMULTANEOUS MINUTE ON THIS SUBJECT PENDING AN OVERALL AGREEMENT ON PUMPING ALONG THE BORDER. WE DO NOT SEE ANY INSURMOUNTABLE DIFFICULTIES IN GOM ATTITUDE

TOWARDS OTHER ELEMENTS OF OUR PROPOSAL, ALTHOUGH IT WOULD BE HELPFUL TO HAVE CLARIFICATION OF WHAT RABASA MEANS BY " NATURL CAUSES" OF FUTURE SALINITY INCREASES ABOVE IMPERIAL DAM.

3. TACTICALLY, WE BELIEVE AMBASSADOR BROWNELL SHOULD EMPHASIZE THE IMPORTANCE TO PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA AND RABASA OF OUR HAVING SPEEDED UP THE DATE FOR THE FINAL SOLUTION FROM 1978 IN THE MAY 13 PROPOSAL TO JULY 1976 IN THE JUNE PROPOSAL. IF RABASA FOLLOWS THE LINE WE ANTICIPATE AND ACCEPTS OUR PROPOSAL IN PRINCIPLE DURING HIS JULY MEETINGS WITH AMBASSADOR BROWNELL, HE WILL WANT TO BE ABLE TO EXPLAIN TO HIS PRESIDENT THE ADDITIONAL CONCESSIONS HE WAS ABLE TO OBTAIN FROM US DURING THE JUNE AND JULY NEGOTIATIONS. OUR HOPE IS THAT FINAL AGREEMENT COULD THEN BE REACHED AFTER AMBASSADOR BROWNELL' S RETURN IN AUGUST SO THAT ECHEVERRIA COULD MAKE A TRIUMPHAL STATEMENT IN HIS SEPTEMBER 1 STATE OF THE NATION MESSAGE.

4. THE ABOVE ASSESSMENT MAY TURN OUT TO BE OVERLY OPTIMISTIC, BUT WE DO BELIEVE THAT ECHEVERRIA AND RABASA FEEL UNDER THE PRESSURE OF TIME AND RECOGNIZE THAT OUR PROPOSAL IS A REASONABLE ONE WHICH CAN BE PUBLICLY DEPICTED AS A VICTORY FOR MEXICO.

5. IF THERE ARE ANY NEW DEVELOPMENTS DURING THE NEXT WEEK WHICH WOULD CAUSE US TO ALTER THIS ASSESSMENT, WE WILL COMMENT FURTHER PRIOR TO THE JULY 6 MEETING. ALTHOUGH WE DO NOT YET HAVE FINAL WORD ON THE MEXICAN PARTICIPANTS, WE BELIEVE THEY WILL BE RABASA, CABRERA AND HERRERA JORDAN. WE ALSO BELIEVE IT LIKELY THAT ADDITIONAL MEETINGS WILL BE NECESSARY ON JULY 9. RABASA HAS BEEN INFORMED OF AMBASSADOR BROWNELL' S AVAILABILITY
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ON JULY 6 AND 9.
MCBRIDE

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